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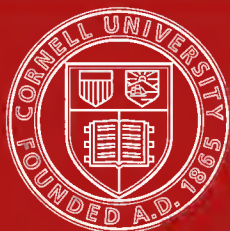
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John Clark Redpath

ALEXANDER HAMILTON:
A STUDY
OF THE
REVOLUTION AND THE UNION.
AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN, DECEMBER 10, 1880.

BY
JOHN CLARK RIDPATH, LL. D.

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of North America."—A. H.

CINCINNATI:
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ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Revolutions, like all other social phenomena, are evolved out of preëxisting conditions. They spring from the action of antecedent forces. When these forces are present the revolution follows as naturally and inevitably as a conflagration bursts forth from the impact of heat with combustibles. In the seemingly irregular course of human society certain tendencies appear; they gather head; they become confluent with other tendencies of a like or contradictory nature; they break the barriers which are imposed to restrain them, and sweep away the political outlines of the past. It is thus that the old forms of society are uprooted, that old institutions are prostrated in the dust, and that old customs are destroyed. Without the antecedent forces, no revolution can exist, any more than an uncaused phenomenon can be found in physical nature. With the preëxisting conditions, the revolution is as sure to appear as the sun is to rise, or the tides to follow the moon. It must be understood as a primary truth that the political cataclysms and social disturbances of mankind occur in obedience to a law which prevails alike in the plant, the animal, and the man—the law of progress by evolution, involving the destruction of the old form by the undergrowth of the new.

While it is true that revolutions result from antecedent conditions; while it is true that the general character of a

revolution will be determined by the nature of the forces which produce it, it is also true that the particular aspect of the struggle, the peculiar bias and direction of the event, will be traceable in a large measure to *the personal agency* of the men by whom the revolution is directed. Leadership is a necessary part and parcel of every social conflict; and the quality of this leadership determines in no small degree the nature and result of the struggle. This is the point of view, indeed, from which man as an individual seems to exercise the largest influence on the destinies of his race. In a revolution man, as man, becomes colossal. He seems to others, and perhaps to himself, to be a creator of the events among which he moves and acts. The powerful impress of his form and fatherhood is stamped upon the features of the age and transmitted to the generations following. In the stormy period of revolt and dissolution, human society receives the impress of the master spirit and bears it forward forever.

Thus it may be seen that general causes, extending back through the centuries, springing from diverse races in different quarters of the globe, and drifting hitherward from the ages past, join at last with personal agency and co-operate with the individual wills of men in producing the critical epochs in human history.

In the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, the hereditary impulses of Brahminism, transmitted for thousands of years; the influence of the Hindu astrologers in predicting that the return of the Sumbut, 1914, which was completed in the year of the outbreak, would end the domination of Great Britain in India; and the peculiar character of Indian society, fixed by the traditions of centuries—all fretting against the regularity of British discipline and the stubborn precision of the provincial government, were the general causes which produced

the outbreak and converted rebellion into revolution. But the personal character of the audacious private, Mungul Pandey; of Nana Sahib, Rajah of Bithoor; of the King of Delhi, and of the ferocious princess of Jhansi, were the personal forces which gave to the rebellion its peculiar character, converting revolt into ruin, and local mutiny into universal massacre.

It would be easy to show that the preëminence of Spain in the fifteenth century was traceable to the superiority of the Visigothic constitution and laws adopted eight hundred years before, at the great councils of Toledo. It would also be easy to show that the prevalence of the spirit of political freedom in the Low Countries was traceable to the predominance of free institutions planted there by the Teutonic tribes, and to the great number of walled towns and chartered cities which, dotting the face of the country, became the nuclei of political agitation; and it would be easy to show that it was the confluence of these two adverse currents in the tides of civilization which caused the revolt of the Netherlands and gave to history one of its most heroic episodes. But it was the personal character and will of the silent Prince of Orange, of Olden Barneveldt, of Count Egmont and Count Horn, and of Maurice, of Nassau, that impressed upon the contest its peculiar features of grandeur, turned revolt into reform, and contributed to the annals of mankind the story of the Dutch Republic.

In that great struggle of the seventeenth century, which temporarily overthrew the institutions of England, dethroned and beheaded the king, upheaved the foundations of the monarchy, and revolutionized the social order, we see the action of antecedents older than the Stuart kings, older than the house of Tudor, older than Runnymede, older than England itself. But the immediate character of the conflict, its grandeur and its folly, were determined by the personal prowess, the will, the persistence, and the indomitable he-

roism of Cromwell and Pym, of Milton and Hampden, of Hugh Peters and Sir Henry Vane.

Likewise in the terrible regeneration of France we behold on the one side the action of forces whose roots, piercing the lethargy of preceding centuries, struck down into the soil of feudalism, taking hold of the house of Capet, twining about all the traditions of legitimacy, and fastening at last on the pretensions of mediæval Rome; while on the other side we see the impulses of democratic opinion, born perhaps in the free cities of the twelfth century, spreading gradually among the people, incorporated by the Encyclopedists in the new French philosophy, springing in little jets of flame through the pages of Rousseau and Voltaire, and finally bursting forth in a tempest of purifying fire. But the peculiar character of the conflict—its violence, its ruinous excesses, its madness, its frenzy, its bravado and defiance of heaven and earth, its glory and grandeur and blood, were traceable to the will and purpose and power of Condorcet and Roland, of Mirabeau and Danton, of Robespierre and Marat, of Demouriez and Bonaparte.

It is thus that the local and limited influence of man, combining with the general tides of causation which pulsate through all times and conditions, becomes a factor in the history of his own and succeeding ages. He is a special cause attached to the side of a larger cause and coöperating with it in directing and controlling the events of his epoch. He is the individual atom in the tides of fate—the personal impulse in the general destinies of the world.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION was one of the most heroic events in the history of mankind. It was not lacking in any element of glory. Whether considered with reference to the general causes which produced it, or viewed with respect to the personal agency by which it was accomplished,

the struggle of our fathers for liberty suffers not by comparison with the grandest conflicts of ancient or modern times. The motives which those great men might justly plead for breaking their allegiance to the British crown and organizing a rebellion; the patient self-restraint with which they bore for fifteen years a series of aggressions and outrages which they knew to be utterly subversive of the liberties of Englishmen; the calmness with which they proceeded from step to step in the attempted maintenance of their rights by reason; the readiness with which they opened their hearts to entertain the new angels of liberty; the backward look which they cast through sighs and tears at their abandoned loyalty to England; the fiery zeal and brave resolve with which at last they drew their swords, trampled in mire and blood the hated banner of St. George, and raised a new flag in the sight of the nations; the personal character and genius of the men who did it—their loyal devotion to principle, their fidelity, their courage, their lofty purpose and unsullied patriotism—all conspire to stamp the struggle with the impress of immortal grandeur.

In their ragged regimentals
 Stood the old continentals,
 Yielding not,
 When the grenadiers went lungeing,
 And like hail fell the plunging
 Cannon shot;
 When the files
 Of the Isles,
 From the smoky night encampment, bore the banner
 of the rampant
 Unicorn,
 And grummer, grummer, grummer rolled the roll
 of the drummer,
 Through the morn !

Let us for a brief space consider what the American Revolution really was. Let us determine, if we may, some-

thing of the nature and causes of the great event, and learn thereby its true place in history. Thus shall we be able more fully to appreciate the personal part which the men of our heroic age contributed to the glory of their own and the welfare of after times.

When, in the fifth century, the barbarians burst in upon the Roman Empire of the West and destroyed it, they were under the leadership of military chieftains. These savage leaders believed themselves, and were believed to be, the offspring of the gods of the North—descendants of Woden and Thor. The half Latinized Keltic populations of the Provinces were quickly reduced to serfdom. They were no match for the Teutonic warriors. These chiefs and their followers, coming out of the cheerless woods of the North, found little to admire in the city life of the Romans. They preferred rather to seek for their new abodes the fastnesses of the rocks and the solitudes of the forest. It thus came to pass that in all the country districts of Europe the institutions of feudalism sprang naturally out of the conditions consequent upon the barbarian invasion. In the cities and towns were the remains of the old urban activities. Here the municipal system of the Romans was not extinguished. Here was perpetuated the tradition of the glory and the grandeur of the Empire. Here the bishops and priests of the papal see labored assiduously to keep alive the remembrance of that great power under whose shadow they had found refuge and strength. And so with perpetual iteration they poured into the ears of the magistrates and barons the story of the grandeur and renown of that mighty dominion which, under the sanction of heaven, had combined in itself all the elements of legitimate authority.

Here, ladies and gentlemen, are the materials out of which has been builded the vast structure called *European*

Monarchy. I can not elaborate. I can only call your attention to the fact that these elements of monarchy were fused in the fiery heats of the Crusades when all Europe, peasant and lord, serf and nobleman, priest and king, flung themselves with blind fanaticism against the defilers of the holy places of the East. Since that event monarchy has been the central feature in the physiognomy of the West. From the twelfth to the eighteenth century monarchical institutions became the be-all and the end-all of Europe. The annals of the European states became the annals of their kings. In Germany, under Sigismund and Maximilian I.; in Spain, under Ferdinand and Isabella; in France, under Louis XI.; and in England, under the Plantagenets and Tudors—everywhere the institution of monarchy grew into a power and grandeur unknown since the decadence of the Roman Empire. Let us then inquire what this thing called monarchy really was.

1. European monarchy was a colossal edition of feudal chieftainship. The king was simply a suzerain on a gigantic scale. Whatever of arrogance and pride and self-will the baronial warrior of the eleventh century felt in his castle halls, that, the typical European king of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries assumed in grander style in his palace and court. It implied a prince lifted immeasurably above his subjects. It implied a people without political rights, dependent for life and liberty upon the pleasure of the king—peasants and serfs whose property might be taken at will, whose lives might be exposed in lawless wars, whose bodies might be used or abused, whose minds might be rightfully kept in the clouds of perpetual night.

2. Monarchy was the embodiment of ecclesiastical domination over secular society. The king was either the head of the church or its obedient servant. The bishops, for

their own good, told the monarch that his right to be king came down out of the skies; that he was by the will of heaven born a prince; that his authority was by the grace of God, and that his person was sacred both by the fact of his royal birth and by the manipulation of the priest on the day of coronation. Thus was the arrogance of the feudal baron bound up with the presumption of the ecclesiastical bigot in the person of the king.

3. As a necessary prop and stay of the system stood a graduated order of nobility: dukes who could touch the hem of the royal garment; marquises who could touch the hem of the duke; knights who could touch the hem of the marquis; lords who could touch the hem of the knight; esquires who could touch the hem of his lordship.

4. As a necessary prop and stay of the graduated nobility stood the principle of primogeniture. For it was manifest that the splendors and virtues of royalty and its dependent orders could never be maintained if the blood in which its glory dwelt was allowed, according to nature's plan, to diffuse and spread into a multitude of vulgar kinsmen.

5. As a necessary prop and stay of the law of primogeniture was the doctrine of entails by which landed estates and all similar properties should tend to concentrate in certain lines of descent, and thereby be maintained in perpetual solidarity. Not only should the first-born receive the titles and nobility of the father, but he should in like manner inherit the estates to the exclusion of collateral heirs.

6. As to the methods of government, the king should not be hampered by constitutional limitations. Ministers and parliaments were not needed except to carry out the sovereign's mandates; and popular assemblies, in addition to being the hot-beds of sedition, were an impediment to government and a menace to civil authority.

7. The people existed for the king's pleasure; the world was made for the king to act in; and heaven was originally designed for the king's abode.

Such was the incubus. Sometimes the people struggled to throw it off. In England they struck down the dragon, but he arose and crushed their bones. Under William III. there was a brief spasm of Whig virtue, but with the accession of the Hanoverian blockheads the old methods came back; the Georges adopted the maxims of the Jacobites, and the dog returned to his vomit.

Now it was against this whole monstrous thing, this whole system of despotic rule, against its principles, against its spirit, against its pretensions, against its tendencies, against its sham methods and bad essence—that our fathers of the Revolution raised the arm of rebellion. This was the thing they hurled down and destroyed. Grand insurrection! Glorious sight to see those scattered American colonists, few, penniless, unequipped, smite the brass gods of the Middle Ages, tear away the trappings of tradition and challenge the Past to mortal combat! Our fathers were heroes.

The other day I saw in the top chamber of Bunker Hill monument two of the four old six-pounders belonging to Massachusetts at the outbreak of the struggle. They are even as battered pop-guns, but, oh! there were men behind them in the days of '76! It was a brave battle, and that is a true thing which Bancroft says when he declares that the report of the rifle of the youthful Washington, as it rang out among the bushes of Great Meadows, on that May morning in 1754 has awakened an echo which shall never cease to reverberate until the ancient bulwarks of Catholic legitimacy shall be thrown down in all the earth.

The American Revolution, like all other political crises of the sort, had two aspects or phases. The first was the

phase of *destruction*, in which the governmental theories of the Middle Ages were attacked and destroyed. The second was the phase of *construction*, in which a new type of government was erected on the site of the abolished edifice. As a destroying force the revolution swept into oblivion the political traditions of several centuries. As a constructive energy it brought in a vast and promising experiment of political reform. As a destructive agent it seized the old theory of politics by the throat and crushed it to the earth. As a constructive force it reared the American Constitution, established the indissoluble Union of the States, and absolutely reversed the old theory of human government by making the people the rightful source of power and reducing the political rulers of mankind to the place of public servants. I repeat it, that, taken all in all, it was the most momentous struggle ever recorded in the annals of the world.

I desire, then, to review the personal agencies which influenced the Revolution and gave to it its grandeur.

First of all there was Washington. He was the balance-wheel of the conflict. He was neither a destroyer nor a builder. He was more of a builder than he was a destroyer. His was the consciousness in which the destructive and the constructive forces of the Revolution joined their issues. He was a conservator of force. By the destroyers he was made general-in-chief; by the builders he was made President. If I must tell you the truth, I must say that the destroyers did not like him—distrusted him. If I must speak plainly, I must say that the builders regarded him as their agent and organ rather than as their leader. It was in his broad and conservative nature that the conflicting tides settled to a calm after the battle had been fought and won. It was within the circle of his influence that that strange compromise called the Constitu-

tion of the United States became a possibility. It was by the preponderance of his influence that the builders carried their compromise to the people and secured its adoption as the fundamental law of the land. Across his cabinet table the angry surf of the constructive and destructive forces of the Revolution broke in a line of perpetual foam.

At the head of the destroyers stood Jefferson, the two Adamses, Paine, Franklin, and Henry. Of these men, with a slight exception in the case of John Adams and a larger exception in the case of Franklin, not one had the slightest particle of constructive talent. They, and those whom they led, were destroyers pure and simple. They were revolutionists in the first intent. They were Levelers and Democrats in the old Greek sense of the word. On the pedestal of the statue of Samuel Adams in one of the squares of Boston, is this legend: "He was the organizer of the of the Revolution." It is certain he never organized anything else!

Let me speak plainly of these great and glorious men. Take Jefferson and Paine. In both of them the aggressive and radical energies of the Democratic instinct ran rampant. They were riotous and uproarious in their Democracy. They gloried in it. They believed that only one thing was good, and that was to destroy. To them the existing order was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. So they laid the axe at the roots of the tree and said, "Let us cut it up, trunk and branches." Whether any other tree should ever grow there, they cared not so much as a fig. Whether the goodness of fecund nature should rear a palm in the waste or send up thickets of thorns and cactus to cover the spot desolated by their energies, they neither knew nor cared. It was enough that the old tree should be torn out by the roots. Take Patrick Henry. With all

deference to the sturdy old patriot, it is but sober truth to say that he could not have constructed a political chicken-coop. And if his neighbors had shown skill in that kind of architecture, he would have considered it an insult to his country. Such men were needed in '76, but they were not needed in '87. Of the immortal fifty-six who signed the Declaration of Independence only eight were sent to the constitutional convention; and of these only two—Franklin and Sherman—were men of commanding influence. Hildreth says, and says truly, that the leveling democracy of '76 was absolutely unrepresented in the convention. The destroyers were not there. The men who knocked the little brass gods of the Middle Ages on the head were gone. The revolutionists were at home trimming apple-trees in the Connecticut Valley or setting tobacco plants on the banks of the James. The work of that destroying democracy which had fired every colony with patriotic zeal and war-like daring was done. Even Massachusetts passed by her giants and sent to the convention Gerry, Gorham, and King. The destroyers lay asleep in their tent, and the builders went forth to build.

At the head of the builders stood the Man of Destiny—one who is said by the *New Britannica*—voicing the sentiment of Europe—to have been the ablest jurist and statesman ever produced in America, and whom the *Edinburgh Review*, as long ago as 1808, declared to have possessed an extent and precision of information, a profundity of research, and an acuteness of understanding which would have done honor to the most illustrious statesman of ancient or modern times.

It is now seventy-six years since ALEXANDER HAMILTON yielded up his life. It has remained for our own day to revive his memory, and out of the logic of great events to determine his true place in history. Men are just be-

ginning to understand and appreciate the great part which he played in the stirring drama of his times. As he recedes from us in the distance a clearer parallax is revealing to us the truly colossal grandeur of his character. Even yet we feel that his full proportion is but half seen in the shadows, and that the next generation, rather than this, will behold him in the magnificent outline of completeness.

We now see that the genius of this man has flashed through and illumined whatever is great and glorious in our national history. Just in proportion as the spirit of Hamilton has dominated our institutions just in that degree has the ark of American civilization been taken up and borne forward in triumph. He has touched us in every crisis. When Daniel Webster poured out the flood of his tremendous argument for nationality, he was only the living oracle of the dead Hamilton. Every syllogism of that immortal plea can be reduced to a Hamiltonian maxim. When the Little Giant of the North-west blundered across the political stage with his feet entangled in the meshes of Squatter Sovereignty he stumbled and fell among the very complications and pitfalls which Hamilton's prescience had revealed and would have obliterated. When the immortal Lincoln put out his great hand in the shadows of doubt and agony, and groped and groped to touch some pillar of support, it was the hand of the dead Hamilton that he clasped in the darkness. When, on the afternoon of the third of July, Pickett's Virginians went on their awful charge up the slopes of Gettysburg they met on the summit among the jagged rocks the invincible lines of blue who were there to rise victorious or never to rise at all. But it was not Meade who commanded them, nor Sickles, nor Hancock, nor Lincoln. Behind those dauntless and heroic lines—rising like a sublime shadow in the curling smoke of battle—stood

the figure of Alexander Hamilton. The civil war was his conflict. Chickamauga and Chancellorsville were his anguish, and Appomattox was his triumph. When the grim-visaged and iron-hearted Lee offered the hilt of his sword to the Silent Man of Galena it was the spirit of the Disruptive Democracy doing obeisance to Hamilton.

I purpose now to note in a few brief paragraphs the principal events in Hamilton's life. He was born in the island of Nevis, one of the British West Indies, on the 11th of January, 1757. His father was a Scotch merchant and his mother a Huguenot lady whose maiden name was Faucette. She had been first married to a physician named Lavine with whom she lived for a short time at St. Christopher. But he soon proved to be of no good, and presently procuring a divorce, she returned to Nevis and was married to the merchant, James Hamilton. By him she had a numerous family of whom only two sons, Thomas and Alexander, reached maturity. The latter was the younger, and bore the name of his paternal grandfather, Alexander Hamilton, of Ayrshire, Scotland.

From his father Hamilton inherited the resoluteness of the Scotch character, a certain tendency to methodical habits, and especially that deductive method of thought for which the Scotch intellect of the eighteenth century was proverbial. From his mother he drew his nobility of character, his vivacious and social disposition, his quickness of perception, his perpetual activity, his studious habit, his personal magnetism, and his genius. She died while he was yet a boy, but her manner and voice and spirit remained forever with him in memory.

After his mother's death the lad Hamilton, was given to some of her relatives and taken to the neighboring island of Santa Cruz. From the indifferent schools of the sea-port

town of this island, by the close of his twelfth year, he had drawn whatever they had to give. He was then placed in the counting-house of Nicholas Cruger, and here he immediately began to display those extraordinary activities which characterized him through life. Such was his proficiency that within a year Cruger went abroad and left young Hamilton, then thirteen years of age, in sole charge of the mercantile house. He conducted the large business and extensive correspondence of the establishment with a dignity and precision which were the marvel of the port. Nor could the foreign merchants who traded with the house of Cruger know but that the letters which they received from Santa Cruz were written by the most experienced clerk in the island.

During two years Hamilton remained at the desk of the counting-house, spending his evenings in study. It was here that he laid the foundations of his great acquirements in after years. Here he learned French, which he spoke through life with the ease and elegance of the best native conversers. His principal instructor in this epoch was Dr. Hugh Knox, an Irish Presbyterian clergyman, under whom he made great headway during his stay in Santa Cruz, and by whom he was encouraged in the project of leaving the West Indies for New York. With the increase of knowledge he had grown restless. He pined for a broader field in which his faculties might expand and his ambition be appeased. Even at the age of twelve we catch a glimpse of the spirit and power which were budding within him. In a letter to young Edward Stevens, of New York, the frank boy Hamilton pens these words of aspiration and promise: "Neddy, my ambition is prevalent so that I condemn the groveling condition of a clerk or the like, to which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I

am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hopes of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may be said to build castles in the air; my folly makes me ashamed, and beg you'll conceal it; yet, Neddy, we have seen such schemes successful when the projector is constant. I shall conclude by saying, *I wish there was a war.*" Perhaps the vision of Wolfe, falling in death but rising to immortality from the Heights of Abraham, was before the eyes of the young enthusiast; but how little did he anticipate the more glorious epoch which was so shortly to open for his panting spirit.

In August of 1772, a terrible storm came in upon the Leeward Islands. A remarkable description of it appeared in one of the local papers. The governor of Santa Cruz was astonished at the vivid details of the destruction. He sought the author and found him in the young lad Hamilton. Arrangements were immediately made to send the youth abroad, that he might receive such education as his genius merited; and so in October of that year he left the West Indies never to return. He took passage in a vessel for Boston, and from that city proceeded at once to New York. Here he was cordially received by Dr. Rogers, Dr. Mason, and William Livingston. To these distinguished men he brought letters of introduction from his old instructor, Dr. Knox; and by Livingston, who was a retired lawyer, he was taken to a country seat near Elizabeth, New Jersey, and admitted to membership in the family. Here his brilliant faculties and fascinating address made him an immediate favorite. For some months he attended the grammar school in Elizabeth, showing the most intense application and astonishing progress. He seized and devoured all kinds of knowledge with an almost feverish hunger. It was

at this period of his life that he formed the habit which he never broke, of talking to himself, saying over and over in a low tone whatever occupied his thought. As he walked he talked, and the thing which he thought was rehearsed in rapid utterance until it had taken the form of a logical proposition never to be shaken from its place.

At this time Livingston was the editor of the *American Whig*, the organ of the popular party in New York. Drs. Rogers and Mason were contributors to this paper, as was also the youthful John Jay, afterward Livingston's son-in-law. These writers were in the habit of meeting at Livingston's house. Debating clubs and political societies abounded in the neighborhood; and the agitation which was soon to break over the land sent its premonitory thrills into every breast. In the midst of these surroundings, still immersed in his studies, Hamilton's political principles began to be shaped and fashioned.

But he was not yet ready for battle. His preparation, indeed, was but begun. By diligent use of his time he was now ready for a collegiate training. He chose Princeton; but before starting thither he drew up for himself a plan of study which, though it embraced the college curriculum, was both novel and original. On presenting himself to Dr. Witherspoon, then president of Princeton, he made a written request that he might be allowed to adopt his own course and be admitted to all classes which his attainments would justify, with permission to advance from class to class with as much rapidity as his exertions would enable him to do. The sedate Witherspoon, acting after the manner of men, declared the request incompatible with the rules of the institution, and so young Hamilton was turned away. He at once returned to King's College in the city of New York, renewed his application to Dr. Cooper, the president, and

was admitted on his own terms. It must be confessed that for a delicate stripling of fifteen years thus to trifle with the almighty powers of learning was a piece of great audacity.

For two years Hamilton remained at Columbia, applying himself with a diligence and zeal rarely witnessed. History, metaphysics, languages, politics, poetry, economics—everything was devoured with the hunger of genius. His memoranda show that Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Hobbes's *Dialogues*, Bacon's *Essays*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, Rousseau's *Æmilius*, Demosthenes' *Orations*, and Aristotle's *Politics*, were now his favorite books. With these he was not only familiar, but in them had a mastery not often attained even in veteran scholarship.

It was already the daybreak of the Revolution. The rank offenses of Great Britain against colonial liberty had gone up to heaven. The Boston Port Bill was passed in March of '74. The colonists spoke openly of resistance. The conservatives, royal officers, reactionary sycophants, and tory ecclesiastics said *Treason*. Then the people spoke louder than before. New York was shaken. A Committee of Defense was appointed, but the people ran ahead of the committee. As a matter of fact the people are always ahead of the committee. When you want any delicate piece of mincing conservatism attended to, you should always appoint a committee. In the day of doubt and danger it is the magnetism and example of personal leadership that brings up Israel out of Egypt.

In the beginning of July, the people of New York called a meeting "in the fields." The particular field in question was in sight, almost in hearing, of Columbia College. Young Hamilton attended the meeting. The speakers had fire and enthusiasm; but the stripling said to his friends: "They have not argued the question." Thereupon he was

called to speak. He went up pale and tremulous to the stand, and from that day the slender collegian was a man of note in the American colonies. His life-work had risen upon him in an hour.

Events followed swift and fast. The military spirit broke out. Political societies were formed. Liberty was debated. The man of brains and courage was at a premium. The skulk and the coward went to their own place. The students of Columbia College took fire. Hamilton organized them and some other young men of the city into an artillery company, and was chosen captain. In the hour of danger and glory the first man is always made the captain. In the day of buncombe the last man is made captain. In the hour of danger and glory men want a hero for a leader. In the day of buncombe they want a fool for a figure-head.

The war came on in earnest, and Hamilton, at the head of his volunteer company of artillerymen, immediately began to display those sterling qualities for which his military career is distinguished. He studied the art of war with a zeal unsurpassed among the officers of the Continental army. With an infallible intuition, he adapted the military science of the books to the somewhat anomalous conditions under which the revolutionary campaigns must be conducted. He had the fire and enthusiasm of Greene, the daring of Wayne, and the caution of Washington.

A few days after the battle of White Plains, in which Hamilton's battery had taken a conspicuous part, when the American army, undisciplined and dispirited, was receding across Manhattan into the Jerseys, the attention of Washington was called to a redoubt which some one had thrown up at Haarlem Heights. The general was astonished at the skill manifested in the construction of the work.

He inquired by whose command it had been built, and was answered, by Captain Hamilton of the artillery. The young officer was sent for to the quarters of the commander-in-chief. It was the conjunction of Jove and Mercury. The two soldiers met, and such was the profound impression made upon the mind of Washington, that the slender fair-faced captain was invited to become the general's aid and private secretary. Hamilton saw that to accept was to deprive himself of that military glory which was almost sure to follow active service in the field ; but to accept was also to be constantly in the companionship and confidence of the Cincinnatus of the West. He chose the latter, and before he was twenty years of age had so won the favor of his chief as to become through life his most trusted counselor.

There is not perhaps in all history an instance of personal attachment more remarkable, more lasting, more unselfish, more honorable, than that of Washington and Hamilton. Great was the disparity between them. Washington was sedate and saturnine ; Hamilton was communicative and sociable. In discerning the ultimate principle of things Washington was slow and dull ; Hamilton, quick as an electric flash. Washington could see a fact, but not its secret springs and causes ; in the power to discover the principia and germs of things, Hamilton surpassed all other men of the Revolutionary epoch. Washington could handle events in mass ; Hamilton could interpret them. The mind of Washington moved to its purpose with heavy strides ; the intellect of Hamilton flew to the mark with unerring accuracy. Washington labored to express that which he knew to be right and true, but there was always spherical and chromatic aberration about the thing he saw ; in Hamilton's mind every fact whirled into focus with the rapidity and precision of the most perfect instrument. Washington

was the least ambitious of all the great men known in history; in Hamilton's breast the fires of a high ambition burned day and night with inextinguishable brightness. But in sincere devotion, lofty patriotism, and unspotted soundness of character, it would be hard to assign the palm.

It thus happened, that the Hamiltonian intellect became the interpreter of the Washingtonian desire. Upon the thing which Washington reached for in the darkness Hamilton turned the full light of his genius. From his hand came nearly all the papers and dispatches of the general-in-chief. Much of the chaos of the Revolutionary tumult sank into order under Hamilton's amazing activities. He was everywhere present. He advised in everything. The discipline of the headquarters of the army was his work. At the public dinners which Washington sometimes gave to his officers and to the great men of the colonies, Hamilton presided with the grace and dignity of the most accomplished diplomat. If any hazardous business arose, requiring celerity and silence, Hamilton was sent to do it. He it was who gave Arnold his desperate chase down the river: it was the avenging angel after the devil. If some matter of great and responsible management, like the bringing down from the North of the army of the inflated Gates, was to be undertaken, Hamilton was commissioned for the work. If some low scheme of inter-colonial intrigue and jealousy, portending ruin to the patriot cause, had to be outwitted and brought to open shame, Hamilton was appointed to the task. He it was—and it is one of the secret passages of history—who drew the blatant Wilkinson to Lord Stirling's dinner table, knowing that he would heat himself with wine and divulge the treasonable conspiracy of Conway, Mifflin, and Gates against Washington, which Hamilton had scented in the air during his recent visit to

the North. If the general-in-chief required a calm, dispassionate, and comprehensive paper, laying before Congress and the country some of the great questions of the Revolution, he had only to indicate his wish, and on the morrow there would be placed in his hands a document that would have done credit to the best diplomacy of Europe. All the way through, from Long Island to Yorktown, from Yorktown to the presidency, from the presidency to Mount Vernon, this same tireless, watchful spirit, this same indefatigable genius went by the side of his chief, through evil report and good, sharing his trust, inspiring his counsels, and delivering his wisdom and patriotism to the army and the people. It is not to the discredit of Washington—for nothing can ever disparage that immortal figure—that Hamilton was his chief support, his oracle, and his guide.

It is not my purpose to review at any length Hamilton's career as a soldier. His extreme youth and the restrictions with which he was hampered as a member of the general's staff obscured the display of his military talents. Yet as occasion offered, his daring and celerity in the field shone out with peculiar luster. He it was who brought up the shattered rear in the perilous retreat from Long Island. Think of a boy of nineteen on such a duty as that! No wonder that Greene and Washington were astonished. At the dangerous passage of the Raritan, with the enemy on the other bank and the river fordable, it was Hamilton's batteries, placed on the heights, that blazed into the face of the foe until the patriots were safe out of reach. He it was who broke the letters which laid bare the treachery of Arnold, and he it was who first revealed to Washington that deep-laid scheme of villainy and treason. When at last, on the night of the 14th of October, the British redoubts at Yorktown were to be carried by storm, Hamil-

ton, by special request made to Washington, was ordered to lead the American advance. Taking his place at the head of the column, he and his men dashed forward and tore through the abatis as if it were a sport of the holidays; and while the British shells were blazing and bursting in the darkness, Hamilton, unhurt, with sword in hand, placed his foot on the shoulder of a soldier and was the first man to leap the parapet in the last charge of the Revolution. The rest came pouring after, and the blackened redoubt was carried without the firing of a gun.

On the evening of the 23d of October, 1781, the watchmen of Philadelphia, going their nightly rounds, uttered this welcome cry: "Ten o'clock! Starlight night! Cornwallis is taken!" It was a fitting thing that this glorious proclamation of freedom and victory should thus be made under the eternal benignity of the open heavens and the silent benediction of the stars, in the streets of that old town which first among the cities of the world had heard the declaration that all men are created equal. Though peace lagged for a season, the war was at an end. The patriots who at Concord and Lexington had begun a battle for the rights of Englishmen had ended by winning their independence.

In all history there is nothing more pitiable than the condition of the civil government of the United States during and just after the Revolution. While the army, under the lead of Washington, covered the American name with glory, Congress, under the lead of nobody, covered it with contempt. Of a certainty it was not the fault of the great and patriotic men who for the most part comprised that body; but it was the inherent weakness of the puerile organism under which they were expected to act. The confederate system, as hurriedly devised amid the terrors of war in the summer of 1777, was the very climax of organic weak-

ness—the paragon of political imbecility. Never since the days of the Amphycionic councils of Greece had the annals of mankind presented a parallel to the farcical absurdities of the Confederation. Think of a government without an executive, without a judiciary, without the power to levy a duty or impose a tax, without ability to inspire respect or enforce obedience, and that is the Confederation. As an organism it had neither head, trunk, limbs, nor vitals. It was an eviscerated myth, a mere shadow, a phantom, a ghost, a political nothing. From 1783 to 1787 the civil powers of the United States were really in a state of chaos; and Washington spoke the truth when he said, in infinite sorrow, that after all the sacrifices of war, the government of his country had become a thing of contempt in the eyes of all nations.

The patriots of the time now came to see that only half of the struggle was over. Through the gray cold morning of doubt dawned the solemn truth that though the war of the *Revolution* was ended, the war for the *Union* remained to be fought. Mere freedom was not enough. In order for freedom to live, it was necessary to build a temple fit for her to dwell in.

It is not needed that I should here recount the deplorable circumstances which drove the Wise men of '87 into the Constitutional Convention. A ruined credit, a bankrupt treasury, a disordered finance, a crazy constitution, a distracted commerce, a disintegrating people, thirteen ghostly States stalking around like specters in a graveyard and making grimaces at a government of shreds and patches—such were the goblins that ruled the hour. The Wise men saw and trembled; and so, acting from motives of patriotism and the instinct of self-preservation, they came together to build they knew not what.

It is the truth of history that no greater task was ever imposed upon a body of men than upon the Constitutional Convention of 1787. It was an hour of danger and doubt in the general destinies of the world. The Confederation had ingloriously failed. The people, apparently satisfied with local independence, had grown lethargic, and seemed to be shockingly indifferent to the general interest of the nation. The process of disintegration went on unchecked, and civil liberty was withering from the land.

About fifty of the leading citizens of the United States appeared in the convention. On assembling, it was the common understanding that the business in hand was the remodeling of the Articles of Confederation. A few leading spirits, such as Washington, Franklin, Charles Pinckney, and Madison, saw further than this; and very soon the issue of making a NEW CONSTITUTION was sprung upon the convention. Indeed, with the progress of debate, it became more and more evident that no mere revision of the old form of government would suffice for the future of America. Thus all of a sudden, and, as I believe, without any positive previous expectancy on the part of the delegates assembled, the whole question of government—government in the abstract and government in its special application to the wants of the Western continent—arose upon the convention. Then followed such a clash of opinions and discord of interests as perhaps has never been elsewhere witnessed in a deliberative body. The ball was opened by Edmund Randolph with his “Virginia Plan” of government, and this was immediately followed by Pinckney with his favorite scheme, a part of which was afterwards incorporated in the Constitution. Then came the outbreak of the smaller States. Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, with two out of the three delegates from New York, raised the

hue and cry that the small States were to be swallowed up in a great consolidated government—a “monarchy” in which the rights of the people would be utterly engulfed. It was the first public parade of that black and spectral nightmare of American politics—the doctrine of State Rights. Here the line was drawn, and here was planted the seed of the deadly upas.

Vain would it be to enumerate the multifarious schemes and inglorious projects of that convention. Many of them were wild, extravagant, visionary. Some sprang from ignorance; some, from misdirected patriotism; some were puerile and ridiculous. While the Virginia plan and the scheme proposed by Pinckney were both before the Committee of the Whole, the State Rights party, headed by Patterson of New Jersey and Lansing of New York, brought forward the “New Jersey Plan” by which it was proposed to retain the old Continental Congress and the Confederative Union nearly as they were, and to elect annually a double-headed president; that is, a plural or a dual executive. It was this absurd project which first called Alexander Hamilton to his feet. He was at the head of the delegation from New York. Thus far he had remained a silent witness of the vain projects daily hatched in the convention. In answer to the rather puerile speech which Patterson made in defense of his double-barreled presidency, Hamilton walked into the arena and boldly declared his dissent from all the plans thus far submitted. The proceedings here, said he, were of such a sort as to weaken his faith in the expediency of Republican Institutions. His own reading of history and study of philosophy had led him to admire the British constitution more than any frame of government with which he was acquainted. In the United States, however, where entails and primogeniture were abolished, where no nobility could exist, where

property was equally divided, and where the whole genius of the people was adapted to popular forms, the real and only expedient thing for the convention to do was to constitute such a frame of government *as should secure English liberty and English stability under a Republican form.* The Constitution of the United States, now to be established, ought to have, and must have, all possible solidity and strength in order that Republican institutions might have a fair chance of surviving, which they certainly would not have if the doctrines recently advocated in the convention should prevail. He was in favor of a *single* Executive who should hold his office during good behavior, and of a senate whose members should have the same tenure as the president. Hamilton closed his speech by offering for the consideration of the convention a sketch of that form of government which he should favor. His plan proposed a government of three departments; legislative, executive, judiciary. The legislative department should consist of two branches; an assembly, and a senate. The members of the assembly should be elected for three years by a direct vote of the people. The senators should be selected by electors chosen by a direct vote of the people. The executive should be chosen by electors who were in turn to be chosen by the people, and should hold his office during good behavior. He should have an absolute veto over the acts of Congress. The judiciary should be chosen by the senate, and should consist of a supreme and subordinate courts after the manner subsequently adopted. As to the States, very little was said except that the governors were *to be appointed by the chief-magistrate of the Nation.*

I bid you mark this plan with care. It has two peculiar features. The first is that the power of the States, in mat-

ters of the national government is absolutely annulled. The dogma of State Rights is utterly sponged out. The word *State* is only mentioned in the scheme as if to emphasize its subordination to national authority. Secondly, every thing is made to rest upon the people. The representatives are to be chosen by the people. The senators are to be named by electors chosen by the people. The president is to be chosen by electors of the people. Everything is as distinctly popular as it is distinctly national. The tenure of the presidency and of the senatorship is not for life, not hereditary, not based on a graduated nobility, not characterized by a single monarchical feature. There is everywhere strength, solidity, equipoise, centralization, unity, but no monarchy.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Constitution proposed by Alexander Hamilton in the convention of 1787 is *the foundation of nationality in the United States*. He was the author of that great thought. I do not mean that he originated the concept. The same grand idea had floated through other patriotic brains. Franklin had seen the vision afar. Washington had seen it in the shadows. Edmund Randolph and Madison had seen it through a glass darkly. But with them all, the thought had been vague and undefined, shifting and uncertain. In Hamilton's consciousness it became a living thing—a vision of light and glory. He only of all the Wise men realized the peril and the possibility of the great occasion. He only understood the past, comprehended the present, and divined the future. He saw as clear as day the one great fact that as between a consolidated Union and no Union at all there was no middle ground. He saw that sovereignty is one and indivisible; and that to talk of sovereign States in a sovereign Union was to utter a political paradox. And so he laid the axe at the root of the tree. He said, *Down with the State*.

He said, *Up with the Nation*. He neither winced nor stammered. He neither balked nor trembled. He neither paled nor faltered. He walked straight up to the bar of greatness with the step of a conqueror. In the folly and dissensions, the truckling and mental reservations, the cross-purposes and 'cowardice of the hour, he struck boldly for the solid ground. He rose and stood upon it. O that his courage had been emulated! O that his temporizing colleagues had rallied to that impregnable rock! O that the spirit of Unity had triumphed then and there! O that the genius of Nationality had risen from that confused arena with the indivisible banner lifted above the clouds and tempests!

The purpose of Hamilton to build an American Nationality directly upon the foundation of the people, without the intervention of the States, was the grandest project conceived by the statesmanship of the eighteenth century. Happy had it been for the destinies of America and for the friends of civil liberty throughout the world if Hamilton's views could have prevailed in the Constitution of our country. Just in proportion as they did prevail, just to the extent that his sound and substantial theories of government were incorporated in our fundamental law, just in that degree has the temple of American liberty been founded on a rock. Just in proportion as his views did not prevail, just to the extent that his comprehensive principles of civil government were thrust aside by temporizing expedients and the miserable shufflings and patchwork of compromise, just to that degree have our institutions been imperiled and the glory of the American name scattered to the winds.

The Federal Convention of '87 closed its work, after a four months' session, by adopting and submitting to the people of the States our present frame of government.

Gerry, of Massachusetts, and Mason, of Virginia, would not sign it because State Rights were overthrown. Edmund Randolph would not affix his name because the executive department was rendered so weak and contemptible. Yates and Lansing, of New York, had both gone home in disgust because the convention was trying to establish monarchy. To this day the name of Alexander Hamilton *stands alone* as the solitary indorsement of the Empire State to the Constitution of the Union.

The influence of Hamilton in giving a final form to the great document was almost as conspicuous and singular as his name. The illustrious Guizot declares that there is not in the Constitution of the United States a single element of order, of force, or of perpetuity which Hamilton did not powerfully contribute to introduce and to make predominant.

As soon as the work of the great convention was transmitted to the States,

A storming fury rose
And clamor such as heard on earth till now
Was never.

The opposition members of the convention became the *avant-couriers* of distrust and antagonism. Wherever they went they cried out, "Overthrow of liberty!" "Tyranny re-established!" "Centralization!" "Monarchy!" The democracy ran to with vehement declamations. There were no more tobacco plants to be set on the banks of the James, nor apple-trees to be trimmed in the valley of the Connecticut. If the Constitution had been at once submitted to the people, it would have been rejected in every State. Such was the popular horror and fear of the consolidated Union that its chief promoters were regarded, in many parts of the country, with an aversion only equaled by that which the patriots had felt for the ministers and emissaries of George III. Patrick Henry, in a public as-

sembly, cried out with a loud voice addressed to Washington: "Even from that illustrious man who saved us by his valor I will have a reason for his conduct. Who authorized the Convention to say '*We the people*,' instead of '*We the States?*'" Unless this tide of popular prejudice could be stemmed and the apprehensions of the masses quieted by sound argument, it was evident that demagogical appeals would triumph over reason and that the Constitution so painfully and patiently elaborated would be rejected with disdain.

It is not invidious to say that at this perilous epoch in our country's history there was in all America but one man who, by the genius within him and the forces of training, had the ability to carry the Constitution before the bar of the people, to overcome their prejudices, to conquer their hereditary jealousy, to allay their fears, to convince their judgments, and to rally them to the support of the consolidated Union. That man was Hamilton. He quietly undertook the cause of the people against themselves. The plan adopted was conceived by himself, and his were the merits of the execution. From his office in New York he began the composition and publication of those famous essays in defense of the Constitution, which will ever remain the pride of statesmen and the confusion of demagogues.

The *Federalist* was the herald of victory to the supporters of the Constitution, and of overthrow to the reactionary Democracy. The calm and masterly arguments were read by the hearthstone of the Revolutionary veteran, and his brow grew thoughtful. They were read by the young debater in the political club, and the opposition sat silent. They were read in great halls and before assemblies of the people, and no man in the ranks of the disorganizers had the courage to make answer. They were read with aston-

ishment wherever the English tongue was spoken, and were applauded to the echo in the *salons* of Paris.

In the composition of the *Federalist*, Hamilton was materially aided by Madison and Jay; and it is but fair to say that the parts contributed by them, though inferior to the work of the master, are worthy of the highest praise. In these great papers, Hamilton had the disadvantage of pleading the cause of an instrument which he knew to be in some respects defective; but recognizing the fact that the Constitution was on the whole the best that the spirit of the times would bear, he undertook the advocacy of the great instrument with all the zeal and enthusiasm of his nature; and such was the ability, the candor, the clearness, the profundity and soundness, the breadth and comprehensiveness of his work that the most renowned publicists of our century have conceded it to be without a superior, perhaps without a parallel, among the political writings of the world.

Meanwhile elections were held and delegates chosen to adopt or reject the Constitution. In several States the opposition had a majority, but the principles upon which the opposition rested were already sapped and mined before the assembling of the conventions. The supporters of the consolidated Union had scattered the *Federalist* into every State, and everything except unconquerable prejudice had given way. The State Rights partisans were reduced to the extremity of repeating the senseless outcry of "Centralization! Monarchy!" But the cry had lost its terrors. In Massachusetts and Virginia the battle was long and fiercely contested, but the friends of the Union triumphed; at evening it was light. Hamilton's genius never shone more conspicuously than in the convention of his own State at Poughkeepsie. In the election of delegates to that body everything had gone against him. Two-thirds of the mem-

bers had been chosen on a platform of pronounced opposition to the Constitution. Governor Clinton, president of the convention, and many of the most eminent men of the State were arrayed under the enemy's banners. That the great Federalist leader could win over these delegates and gain a sufficient number of votes to secure the adoption of the Constitution seemed beyond the reach of possibility. Day after day he stood up and led the swelling minority. Even when not speaking his thin lips were seen to be constantly moving in silent formulation of arguments that should answer and persuade. With infinite chagrin the opposition saw its majority melting away; and when at last the news came in from the Potomac that the Old Dominion had given her vote for the consolidated Union, Hamilton arose and said: "Virginia has ratified the Constitution. The Union is an accomplished fact. I move that we now cease from our contentions and add New York to the new empire of republican States." The effect was electrical. Even Governor Clinton voted *aye*. The Union *was* an accomplished fact; and the man by whose magnificent powers the grand work had been effected, bore from the smoking arena the laurel crown of triumph.

In the formation of his cabinet Washington tendered the secretaryship of the treasury to Robert Morris. The distinguished banker declined the position, but in doing so suggested to Washington that the one man in the United States who was fitted both by studies and ability to create a public credit and to bring the resources of the country into active efficiency, was Alexander Hamilton. The prediction was fully verified. The immediate success which Hamilton achieved in the face of difficulties which might well have appalled the most courageous spirit, is without a parallel in the history of cabinets.

Hamilton became the real organizer of the new government. Upon the still youthful and elastic form of his old military secretary, Washington rested his powerful hand as on a pillar of support. Besides the pressing and responsible offices of his own department just emerging from chaos—the public credit, like Milton's lion, still hanging half-created to the ground and "pawing to get free"—Hamilton had to share the counsels of his chief and to bear with him the burdens of the new Nation. His state papers issued during the two terms of his service in the cabinet have been pronounced the ablest ever produced by an American secretary. His report on the constitutionality of a National bank, in which he elaborates his favorite theory of the implied powers of the Federal Government, is a masterpiece on that difficult branch of statecraft; and his great thesis on manufactures, embracing in its scope the whole policy of the government, such as he desired it to be, with respect to the multifarious industries of the American people and the necessity of encouraging those industries by protective legislation, is of itself sufficient to establish his rank as the foremost publicist of his epoch.

After retiring from the cabinet, Hamilton was offered the chief-justiceship of the United States, but he declined the proffered honor and retired to private life. In his adopted State he soon became the recognized leader of the bar—a leader without a peer or rival. For nine years—broken only by a brief interval in 1798, when he was called from retirement by the now aged Washington to become first major-general of the army in the expected war with France—he continued the admiration of his friends and one of the most distinguished citizens of the Nation. What the future might have had in store, what influence he might have had upon the destinies of his country, to what

high honor that country might have called him, will remain a part of the mystery of that clouded valley which Mirza saw in his vision.

Of the occasion and the manner of the death of Hamilton I need not speak. Vain would it be to harrow the sensibilities and passions of our nature by reciting again the story of that malicious, cowardly, devilish murder. Little need to recount the stealthy steps by which Aaron Burr approached his victims, or to emphasize the one prodigious mistake of Hamilton's life in accepting the challenge of that libidinous assassin. For all this anger and sorrow there is but one compensation, and that is that in the eternal justice of things the name of the murderer has been cast out with utter contempt and loathing, while the memory of the murdered statesman has been gently covered with the blessings of his countrymen and the perpetual benediction of history. In the great Park of the Metropolis of the Nation, within sight of the spot where the young collegian, fired with the zeal of boyhood, first raised his voice for the rights of man and the freedom of his country, a grateful son, with the encouragement of a grateful people, has lately unveiled a granite statue of his father, while statesmen, orators and poets, fair women and brave men, with applauding hands and cheering voice have honored the memory of the illustrious dead.

It is one of the peculiarities of our times to have revived an interest in Hamilton's character and work. With the subsidence of the tumult of the Civil War men have begun to look more thoughtfully into the antecedents of the bloody struggle. This fact, more than any other, has brought into clear relief the worth, the grandeur, the glory, of THE HAMILTONIAN UNION; and this fact more than any other has made as odious as it deserves to be the pernicious

heresy of State Rights and secession. So the defeated but still vital apologists of nullification and disunion, the old disorganizers and their descendants, have gone to malign the memory of Hamilton and defile his work. They say that he was an enemy to American liberty; a bold, bad man; a conspirator against the freedom of his country.

It is averred that Hamilton was a monarchist—a secret foe to Republican institutions—a hater of the simple and severe forms of Democratic government. If this were true, then indeed was he a profound hypocrite and dissembler. For no man could have written the preamble to the Constitution of the United States and defended that instrument in the ablest political papers produced in the eighteenth century, and at the same time have been a secret foe to Republican liberty, *unless*, his moral character had been on a level with that of Mephistopheles. If we open Hamilton's works—and it would appear that every man might well be judged by the works he leaves on record—we find the charge that he was at heart in favor of introducing kingly rule into the United States utterly and defiantly contradicted. Mark this his indignant language :

“The idea of introducing a monarchy or aristocracy into this country * * * * is one of those visionary things that none but madmen could meditate. * * But if we incline too much to Democracy we shall soon shoot into a monarchy. * * * * The fabric of the American Empire ought to rest on the solid basis of the consent of the people ; and the streams of national power ought to flow immediately from that pure original fountain of all legitimate authority.” Can these words have come from a man who was secretly on the side of kings and princes ?

Whence, then, comes the charge that Hamilton was a monarchist ? Who is its author ? I answer, a political

opponent—Jefferson. He it was who more than all others together gave currency to this view of Hamilton's opinions on the question of government; and from this source have sprung all the charges and innuendoes against the political integrity of one who is said by the historian Niebuhr to have been as great as the greatest of his age. The charge that Hamilton desired the establishment of a monarchy in America is not true. It is a partisan falsehood proceeding from a political opponent, and revamped and reissued from time to time in the interest of those who desire to weaken the pillars of our nationality. In the disturbed era preceding the adoption of our Federal Constitution, when the form of government to be instituted in the United States was still an open question, Hamilton believed and taught that in the history of mankind the best example of civil liberty combined with social order had been afforded by the government of Great Britain. And what he said was true. Let him who can, point to a solitary State, ancient or modern, in which the liberty of the citizen has been as well guarded as under the constitution of the British monarchy. The Cromwellian principle was that every Englishman shall be protected if it requires every other Englishman to do it. And this very day, if in one of the provinces of Great Britain a company of political thugs and midnight assassins should bind themselves with an oath, put on masks, and sally forth to terrify, burn, and murder, the eye-balls of the British lion would turn green with rage, and in three days he would make Rome howl.

All this Hamilton said—and more. He said it when the question of government in America was still an open question. He constantly cited the precedents of English liberty, and kept his countrymen ever reminded of that which they were ever prone to forget, namely that it was

English liberty which the Americans fought for and won in the war of the Revolution. He would have the people remember that in the glorious era of the Commonwealth England had fought a battle for America, just as America had now fought a battle for England. Their Cromwell was our Cromwell, and our Washington was their Washington. Their Milton was our Milton, and our Franklin was theirs. To say this, and to repeat it over and over, was not to utter sympathy with monarchical institutions: it was the soundest of all republicanism. It was the most loyal political truth in the world.

Jefferson was not a competent witness against Hamilton. The testimony of Alexander H. Stephens and Robert Toombs would hardly be accepted against the political principles of Sumner and Morton. Jefferson was honest, but he was embittered. Every vein in him was tide-full of the virtues and vices of radicalism. He was fired with intense prejudices. He had brooded over the evils of tyranny until he could have distrusted the moon for having the shape of a crescent. He could have mistaken the shadow of a stork in the marshes of the Chickahominy for the living apparition of George III. Jefferson was for a democracy or nothing. A man who could say that he found more pleasure in planting peas than he did in the Constitution of the United States was not a competent witness against the framers of that Constitution. He who, while holding the second office in the gift of his country, declared that under the administrations of Washington and John Adams the government of the United States had been more arbitrary and tyrannical than that of England, at the same time saying that the old State governments were the best in the world, could hardly be expected to speak the truth of one who had striven with all his might to give the

Union additional power and prerogatives. Jefferson openly accused Washington of being a monarchist. He said that John Adams and Edmund Randolph were monarchists. He declared that all of the Federalists were monarchists, and that with the continuation of Federalism the Revolution would have been fought in vain. He croaked on this question through all the figures and forms of speech. It is amazing to what extent he carried his denunciations of those who held the doctrine of a consolidated Union. Even after the close of Washington's administration, when the United States under the Constitution had taken high rank among the nations of the earth, he poured out in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of '98 all the rank poison of nullification and State Rights. Calhoun and Hayne never went beyond him in his reckless attacks on national supremacy. If the Kentucky Resolutions, now existing in Jefferson's own hand, had been penned by Alexander H. Stephens in the palmiest days of the Rebellion they could not have been more heavily freighted with the deadly heresies of secession.

Upon this man's testimony we are asked to believe that Hamilton—Hamilton who wrote the preamble to the Constitution and fought for that instrument a victorious battle against a two-thirds majority in the convention at Poughkeepsie—was a monarchist. The evidence is not sufficient. In after years when Jefferson was hard pressed to give some substantial evidence of his oft-repeated charges against Hamilton he could adduce nothing more tangible than an after-dinner remark which Hamilton was *said* to have made at Jefferson's own table, to the effect that the British constitution might be regarded as the best in the world. The evidence does not convict. And even if it did, it is high time for the American people to be plainly

told that such a government as that of Great Britain, with its magnificent House of Commons and Responsible Ministry, *is* better, *is* to be preferred, *is* a safer refuge for civil liberty than any nondescript secession confederacy. But while this is true, be it never forgotten that the consolidated, indivisible, republican Union, to the defense of which Hamilton contributed the vast resources of his genius, is infinitely better than either confederacy or kingdom. *Vive la Republique!*

In the United States the problem has been not only to emancipate man and to keep him free, but also to create a Nation of freemen with whom the will of the majority shall have the force of sovereign law. Jefferson seized the first part of this problem; Hamilton grasped it all. It was because Jefferson could not and would not see the importance of transforming the United States into a Nation that he remained to his dying day wedded to the destructive theories of Democracy. He was a great patriot, and a bad statesman. His ability to destroy existing evils was only equaled by his inability to create new institutions. He could write the Declaration of Independence, but could not appreciate the grandeur of the Union. He could declare the rights of man, but could not construct or even conceive the organic forms necessary to preserve them.

Ladies and gentlemen, I say without prejudice or passion that the later governmental theories of Thomas Jefferson have been the bane of American politics. The Jeffersonian democracy, by itself, means anarchy and ruin. It means the dissolution of political unity and the lapse of all things into chaos. If one plan, one purpose, one hope, one destiny be good for the American people, or for any people, then the Jeffersonian democracy is *not* good except in so far as it yields to the Hamiltonian Union. In the history

of the past the democracy has done marvels. It has pulled down the thrones of despotism. Here in the West it has lighted a torch which shall never be extinguished. It has startled the nations by its courage and magnanimity. It has written *Sic Semper Tyrannis* in a record that shall outlast the obelisks of Egypt. It has made arbitrary power odious and damned the doctrine of the domination of the few over the many with an everlasting curse. It has given to liberty a new definition in the language of mankind. It has preached the pure gospel of human nature in the presence of trembling kings, and has painted an aureole of glory about the head of him who dares to die for freedom. But the Jeffersonian Democracy, great as it is, must bend the knee to the Hamiltonian Union. Otherwise there is nothing before us but discord, dismemberment, and death.

The democratic instinct is still ready, as it has ever been, to defeat itself by audacity. It cries out for liberty, equality, fraternity; but it forgets that liberty, equality, and fraternity, can exist only within the bulwarks of the Nation. Outside of the strong towers of Union there is nothing but anarchy, disintegration, and barbarism.

I am for all the rights of the Jeffersonian Democracy, and I am for all the powers of the Hamiltonian Union. I am for the Jeffersonian Democracy *under* the Hamiltonian Union. This is the key of American liberty. Give us the unobstructed exercise of Democratic rights *under* the unobstructed exercise of National supremacy, and you have the prize for which the ages have contended. But if any man will put the Hamiltonian Union under the feet of a disruptive Democracy turn upon him the guns of Gettysburg!

As between the Nation and the State, I say, *Down with the State and up with the Nation*. The Hamiltonian maxim is the one thing cardinal in American politics. How

otherwise shall the rights of man be made secure except by the supremacy of law and the oneness of the Nation? Where shall we go for the maintenance of individual liberty except to the flag of "the States in Empire?" How shall the precious rights of local self-government—the right of every man to adjudge his own affairs according to his will—be guaranteed and perpetuated except by the supreme power of unequivocal Nationality?

This one thing essential to the perpetuity of his country Hamilton grasped with greater sagacity and profounder penetration than did any other man of the epoch. The rest doubted, wavered, compromised; he only stood fast, holding the anchor. He divined the future. He saw in the distance the storms and perils to which the American people were to be exposed. He understood the besetting sins of democracy as well as he understood the vices of despotism. The study of history gave him his materials; genius gave him his insight. Every relapse of antiquity he analyzed to its elements and causes. Every abortive project of the human race struggling for freedom he read as an open book. Every complication and tendency of modern Europe he knew by heart. "*Hamilton avait divine l'Europe*," said Talleyrand. To the wisdom of the philosopher he added the vision of the prophet. With the lore of the jurist and statesman he joined the virtues of the patriot and philanthropist.

If Alexander Hamilton could have had his way he would have choked the serpent of disunion even as Hercules strangled the Hydra. If he could have had his way the pernicious doctrines of secession and dismemberment, whether in New England or Carolina, would have died without an advocate. If he could have had his way the patriotic but infatuated people of the Southern States would

never have closed their hearts to the blessed memories of the Revolution and rushed blindly after the shameful banners of disunion, into the dark gorges of blood and death. If Hamilton could have had his way the atrocities of Fort Pillow and Belle Isle, the horrors of Andersonville and Libby, would never have stained the escutcheon of our country or blackened the annals of the world. If he could have had his way the fairest portion of our land would not to-day be sitting in darkness and gloom, crouching in the corner of the temple of liberty, but half recovered from the wild insanity and fierce hatred of bloody war. O that the day may speedily dawn when the distrust and suspicion of the disruptive and hostile South shall give place to returning confidence in the glory of the Nation and love for the starry banner of that indissoluble Union made sacred by the sorrows of our fathers !



Gaylord

PAMPHLET BINDER

Syracuse, N. Y.

Stockton, Calif.

